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Glimpses of Raja Yoga: An Introduction to Patanjali's Yoga Sutras (Yoga Wisdom Classics)

Vimala Thakar

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In Glimpses of Raja Yoga, Vimala Thakar introduces the basic concepts of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras by focusing on different sutra, or aphorism, in each of the twelve chapters. In her opening chapter, she presents the historical and cultural background of Patanjali's Raja Yoga. Chapter 2 contains an eloquent invocation of the dimension of Silence—the meditative state that one enters with the stilling of the mind. Chapters 3-6 examine the ethical principles and observances (the yamas and niyamas) that form the foundation of a healthy spiritual practice. Here Vimala discusses the importance of ahimsa (non-violence) and satya (truthfulness), and offers a radical interpretation of brahmacarya based on her understanding of Sanskrit. Chapter 7 concerns the kleshas or causes of suffering such as avidya (ignorance) and asmita (egotism). Chapter 8 discriminates between dharana (meditation with deliberate focus) and dhyana (effortless meditation), and reflects Vimala's own experience. Chapter 9 describes the relation of prakriti (matter) and purusha (spirit) according to Patanjali. Chapters 10-12 describe the ultimate goal of the yogic journey—the absolute freedom of samadhi.

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